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New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 20th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. KITTIKHOUN (Lao People's Democratic Republic)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 84: UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY FOR PALESTINE REFUGEES IN THE NEAR EAST (continued) (A/51/13, A/51/369, A/51/370, A/51/371, A/51/439, A/51/476, A/51/495, A/51/509, A/51/915-S/1996/235)

1. Mr. AL-OTAIBI (Kuwait) stressed the importance of the services provided by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), particularly in health care, education and humanitarian relief. Those services much be maintained so that the Agency could fulfil its mandate in accordance with the United Nations resolutions on the subject. The League of Arab States, in its resolution 5584 of 15 September 1996, had rejected any attempt to reduce or suspend the services provided by UNRWA in any of its spheres of activity, including food aid programmes. The League had also warned that the Agency's budget deficit should not be used as a pretext for imposing financial burdens of any kind on the refugees to cover the cost of those services.

2. Five years had elapsed since the Madrid agreements had initiated the peace process, but Israel was persisting in taking measures which violated the most elementary and legitimate rights of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories. Despite the agreements reached between Israel and the Palestinian Authority within the framework of the peace process, the economic and social conditions of the Palestinian refugees had not improved, and in some respects they had worsened. Israel was continuing to apply the old policy of arbitrary arrests, closure of entire areas, imposition of curfews, etc., which was incompatible with the norms and practices of international law. The situation prevailing in the occupied territories was irrefutable proof that Israel had not made any real effort to create a favourable environment for the relaxation of tension or to adopt confidence-building measures. Nor had it fully implemented the Oslo and Taba agreements. As a result, the Agency's capacity to carry out its tasks to the full in the occupied territories had been undermined, and that in turn would prolong the difficult situation of the refugees.

3. Kuwait fully supported the position of the Arab States with regard to the peace process in the Middle East, formulated at the summit meeting held in Cairo in June 1996. At that meeting, the Arab States had reiterated their irrevocable commitment to support the peace process with a view to achieving a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the region in accordance with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), and on the basis of the principle of land for peace, Israel's withdrawal from all the occupied territories and respect for the right of return of the Palestinian refugees, in accordance with paragraph 11 of General Assembly resolution 194 (III). Since the signing of the Declaration on the Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements, in September 1993, Kuwait had provided economic assistance of various kinds to the Palestinian people amounting to a total of over 25 million dollars. It was also continuing to make an annual contribution of 1.5 million dollars to the UNRWA budget and would continue to provide financial support to the Agency.

4. Mr. BIN AGAH (Malaysia) commended the work carried out by UNRWA and said that, since its establishment almost 47 years previously, the Agency had instilled hope and provided valuable services to the 3.3 million Palestinian

refugees who were on the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and in Jordan, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic. The Peace Implementation Programme, begun in 1993, had made it possible to develop the basic infrastructure, create employment and in general improve the socio-economic situation of the refugees.

5. Malaysia believed that the transfer of the headquarters of UNRWA from Vienna to the Gaza Strip was a positive and timely step, which would make it possible for the Agency's activities to be better harmonized with those of the Palestinian Authority, so that in the future, when appropriate and feasible, those activities could be transferred permanently to the Palestinian Authority. It was to be hoped that the working relationship between UNRWA and the Palestinian Authority would be further strengthened and would become institutionalized. Malaysia noted with concern, however, the obstacles imposed by the Israeli authorities on movements of Palestinian staff of UNRWA, since that had unfavourable repercussions on the performance of their duties, as noted by the Commissioner-General of UNRWA in his report. Malaysia found it regrettable that the Israeli authorities, alleging security concerns, had closed access to the West Bank and Gaza Strip on 11 occasions during the past year. Such measures were detrimental to the economic activity of those areas, increased unemployment, and led to a worsening of the socio-economic situation.

6. Malaysia shared the concern expressed by the Commissioner-General of UNRWA regarding the Agency's financial situation since, unless urgent measures were adopted, UNRWA could be forced to declare bankruptcy or completely suspend some basic programmes. Neither of those options would correspond the interests of the Palestinian people and the peace process. Malaysia hoped that the international community would make a greater effort to increase its contributions to the UNRWA budget. For its part, it would continue to make contributions to the Agency, within its capabilities.

7. At the time, Malaysia had welcomed the agreement reached between Israel and the Palestinian Liberation Organization, signed in Washington on 28 September 1996, which represented an important step towards the achievement of a just and lasting solution of the Palestinian problem. It was now discouraged to see that since the election of the new Government in Israel, the peace process had taken a new direction. The newly elected Israeli authorities were refusing to respect the agreements signed by the previous Government and the Palestinian Authority, and Prime Minister Netanyahu's decision to exclude any possibility of compromise on Jerusalem or a Palestinian State, and non-fulfillment of the principle of "land for peace" were jeopardizing the peace process. The Israeli Government's decision to authorize the expansion of settlements, the confiscation of Palestinian land and the opening of a tunnel near the Al-Aqsa mosque were also part of that process. Malaysia urged the Government of Israel to respect all the agreements signed with the Palestinian Authority and to refrain from creating new circumstances on the round which were prejudicial to the peace process, and from imposing new conditions for the resumption of negotiations.

8. Mr. SANTAPUTRA (Thailand) said that the Middle East peace process had achieved remarkable progress since the formulation of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements on 13 September 1993. After 26 years of estrangement, a negotiating process had been initiated, setting a determined start for a permanent solution to the conflict. The first stage of

the negotiations had led to the establishment in May 1994 of Palestinian self-rule in the Gaza Strip and Jericho. In September 1995, the seconded stage had been completed with the signing of the Israel-Palestine Interim Agreement on the West Bank and Gaza Strip, known as the Taba Agreement. However, the final and most crucial stage, which had begun in May 1996 and involved negotiations over the permanent status of Jerusalem, the situation of Arab refugees, Israeli settlements and security arrangements, had yet to be fully accomplished.

9. The peace process had been slowed down by certain setbacks, but all the sides concerned had shown strong determination to overcome them. The summit meeting held recently in Washington D.C., and the negotiations held in Erez and elsewhere in the Middle East, were efforts to regain the momentum of the peace process. Thailand firmly believed that a durable solution could be achieved only through peaceful means, in full respect for the relevant United Nations resolutions, in particular Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). All the parties concerned should respect the commitments made in the Declaration of Principles of 1993.

10. Since the outbreak of the conflict, tens of thousands of Palestinians had become homeless, had been displaced and had had to seek refuge in various places, including the occupied territories of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and in countries such as Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Sudan, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and Tunisia. The difficult situation of those refugees and the pressing need to assist them had given rise to the establishment of UNRWA in 1949. Since that time, the Agency had carried out highly commendable work. With the support of voluntary contributions, UNRWA provided health, education, humanitarian assistance and other services to Palestinian refugees. Over time, the Agency's tasks had become increasingly complex and difficult. However, even in the current situation, in which UNRWA was facing particular difficulties owing to budgetary constraints and the fact that the Israeli authorities had closed the West Bank and Gaza Strip on several occasions, the Agency had continued to provide assistance to refugees, as reflected in the report submitted to the Fourth Committee by the Agency's Commissioner-General. The General Assembly, in its resolution 50/28 A, had extended the Agency's mandate to 30 June 1999. Member States should provide it with the financial resources it needed in order to carry out its work effectively. Thailand, which for more than 20 years had had to make room for and accommodate hundreds of thousands of refugees and displaced persons coming from its eastern and western borders, fully understood the enormous and complex task before UNRWA. Since 1960, Thailand had always made contributions to the Agency's budget and hoped that the negotiation process would lead to a just and lasting peace in the region in the very near future.

11. Mr. DOUDECH (Tunisia) condemned the decision of the Government of Israel not to abide fully by the agreements concluded with the representatives of the Palestinian people during the peace process. The attitude of the Israeli authorities had had a profound impact on the ability of UNRWA to carry out its operations and fulfil its mandate. As a result of the Israeli policies, the problems of the Palestinian refugees were increasingly complex and urgent. At the same time, the difficulties confronting the Agency as a result of those policies were much greater, particularly on the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip. The Agency needed a favourable environment, in which basic conditions of security were fulfilled, in order to carry out its activities and provide

services to refugees. It was incumbent on the Israeli authorities to create and maintain that environment. If the refugees' situation was to improve, the new Government of Israel, as a gesture of goodwill, should take specific action to show that it was prepared to comply with the peace agreements. If such measures were not adopted as soon as possible, the situation would probably grow worse and an exceptional opportunity to establish peace would be lost. The Agency played a crucial role in improving the refugees' situation; if their situation improved, their support for the peace process would doubtless be stronger.

12. It should be noted that, in the past year, despite the very difficult circumstances in which it had carried out its activities, including the scarcity of financial resources, the Agency had continued to make a great effort to satisfy the refugees' daily needs. That extraordinary work deserved the gratitude and assistance of all. In the meantime, the number of refugees continued to increase. The aggravation of the budgetary deficit of UNRWA in recent years could have a serious impact on the implementation of a number of projects, in particular those relating to health care and education. The international community must do its utmost to resolve the Agency's enormous financial difficulties as rapidly as possible. In that connection, he wished to highlight the work carried out in 1996 by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, who had organized a number of meetings with donor countries in order to obtain their support at a difficult time for the Agency. Lastly, Tunisia reaffirmed its support for the peace process in the Middle East and reiterated that it was prepared to participate in all multilateral activities and meetings organized to that end.

AGENDA ITEM 90: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES BY THE SPECIALIZED AGENCIES AND THE INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS ASSOCIATED WITH THE UNITED NATIONS (continued) (A/51/23 (Part IV), chap. VII, para. 16)

13. The CHAIRMAN invited the Committee to vote on the draft resolution contained in paragraph 16 of chapter VII of document A/51/23 (Part IV).

14. A recorded vote was taken.

In favour: Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Australia, Bahrain, Barbados, Belize, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Chile, China, Costa Rica, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Ecuador, Egypt, Fiji, Ghana, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jordan, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Malta, Mexico, Mongolia, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nicaragua, Oman, Pakistan, Philippines, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Singapore, South Africa, Sudan, Suriname, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Zimbabwe.

Against: Belgium, Papua New Guinea.

Abstaining: Andorra, Armenia, Austria, Belarus, Bulgaria, Canada, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Morocco, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

15. The draft resolution was adopted by 62 votes to 2, with 39 abstentions.*

16. Mr. HOLOHAN, explaining the vote of the States members of the European Union, said that they supported the work carried out by the specialized agencies in the Non-Self-Governing Territories in the humanitarian, technical and educational fields. Nonetheless, the European Union believed that the statutes of those agencies should be strictly respected and had therefore abstained in the vote on the draft resolution on that question.

17. Referring to agenda item 89, he explained that the States members of the European Union had voted against the draft resolution on foreign economic interests, submitted under that item, in the belief that the text would have been more balanced with the amendments that it had proposed. Despite the consultations held at an early stage with the Special Committee, the final version of the draft resolution had still not been satisfactory. the European Union once again requested the Special Committee to be more mindful of its observations in drafting a resolution in 1997.

18. As for the draft decision on military activities, submitted under agenda item 19, the European Union reiterated its objections to that proposal. As it had repeatedly indicated, the question referred to in the draft decision was not included among the agenda items which the General Assembly had allocated to the Fourth Committee; the States members of the European Union had therefore felt compelled to vote against the draft decision.

19. The CHAIRMAN said that the Committee had thus concluded its consideration of agenda item 90.

AGENDA ITEM 19: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES (A/C.4/51/L.11; A/51/23 (Part VI), chap. X, para. 17)

Questions of American Samoa, Anguilla, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Guam, Montserrat, Pitcairn, Saint Helena, Tokelau, Turks and Caicos Islands and United States Virgin Islands

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* The delegations of Algeria, Burkina Faso, Colombia, Eritrea, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Saint Lucia, Sierra Leone, the United Arab Emirates and Zambia subsequently announced that it had been their intention to vote in favour of the draft resolution; the delegations of Azerbaijan, Belgium, Kazakstan, the Russian Federation and Slovakia subsequently announced that it had been their intention to abstain.

20. The CHAIRMAN invited the Committee to consider document A/C.4/51/L.11, which contained amendments proposed by the United States of America and the United Kingdom to the draft resolution contained in paragraph 17 of chapter X of the report of the Special Committee. The Chairman, with the assistance of the Bureau of the Committee, had organized informal consultations between the sponsors of the amendments and the Special Committee in an effort to find a compromise solution on the proposed amendments. It had not been possible to resolve all the differences; however, both parties had shown signs of flexibility and a willingness to cooperate and had managed to reach an agreement on seven of the 25 proposed amendments. The sponsors, for their part, had withdrawn two of the amendments.

21. Mr. ARKWRIGHT (United Kingdom) expressed appreciation for the Chairman's effective cooperation in the consultation process, which had made it possible for some of the amendments to be accepted. It would be desirable to continue negotiating in search of further areas of agreement. Accordingly, the United Kingdom wished to submit a draft decision to the Committee for consideration with a view to postponing further consideration of the issue in order to give the administering Powers and the Special Committee time to come to some understanding. The draft decision read as follows: The General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee), decides to postpone until March 1997 consideration of the questions of American Samoa, Anguilla, Bermuda, the British Virgin Islands, the Cayman Islands, Guam, Pitcairn, Saint Helena, the Turks and Caicos Islands and the United States Virgin Islands. Tokelau had been omitted, since the Committee had adopted, by consensus, a draft resolution on that question.

22. Mr. JONAH (Sierra Leone) supported the draft decision submitted by the representative of the United Kingdom.

23. Mr. MARRERO (United States of America) said that for many years his country and the United Kingdom, the administering Powers of the Non-Self-Governing Territories referred to in the draft resolution submitted by the Special Committee of 24, had expressed serious concern and dissatisfaction with the work of that Committee. In 1971 they had withdrawn from membership of the Special Committee, deeming the work they had been doing there to be pointless. In 1992, having determined that the practices and policy of the Special Committee had not changed, the two administering Powers had decided not to participate further in its discussions. Since that time, year after year, they had questioned the Special Committee's report and had sought to amend it. While some minor progress had been made, the basic differences remained. The situation did not serve the objectives of the Organization, its members, or the territories and their inhabitants. In fact, it was in large measure a relic of the ideological issues and confrontations of the cold war.

24. The United States delegation was not satisfied with the existing state of affairs. It believed that many members of the Committee were of the same view and that the members of the Special Committee also wished to end the current deadlock. Consequently, it had been pleased to note that, in 1996, the Chairman of the Fourth Committee had taken the initiative, for the first time, of bringing the parties together with a view to initiating a dialogue on the questions that were still unresolved. The outcome of those meetings had been a greater degree of mutual understanding, and several outstanding problems had

been settled. The Special Committee had included some of the amendments proposed by the United States and the United Kingdom in its report; the administering Powers, for their part, had withdrawn some of their proposed amendments and accepted the Special Committee's draft text. Most important of all, however, the process had produced good will and confidence on both sides.

25. At the latest informal meeting between the administering Powers and the Special Committee, his delegation had suggested that the Fourth Committee should not take any decisions on the question in 1996, so that the remaining differences could be satisfactorily resolved and the Committee could be presented with a more satisfactory solution, based on firmer commitments and a more cooperative attitude on the part of the administering Powers. A substantial number, possibly a majority, of the members of the Special Committee did not wish to see the work begun by the Chairman abruptly interrupted with a vote at the current session. The United States delegation was prepared to continue negotiating, and was confident that the negotiations would bear fruit the following year. It therefore urged the Committee not to close the door to the possibility of achieving a long-term solution.

26. Mr. SAMANA (Papua New Guinea), speaking in his capacity as Acting Chairman of the Special Committee, expressed opposition to the draft decision submitted by the United Kingdom, as it was at variance with the consensus of the Special Committee. During the Special Committee's 1996 session the Chairman had had conversations with the Permanent Representatives of the United Kingdom, the United States and France and the United States Ambassador concerned, and had assured them that he was prepared to hold consultations on any question relating to decolonization. As was well known, the administering Powers, with the exception of New Zealand, continued to disregard the work of the Special Committee and to decline to participate officially in its meetings.

27. Nearly five months after the Special Committee had prepared the draft decisions that were now being submitted to the Fourth Committee for consideration, the United States and the United Kingdom had submitted 25 amendments and were insisting that the Special Committee must agree to all of them, saying that otherwise they would ask to have each amendment put to a vote. Such a position raised serious questions about the procedure that should be followed in considering so fundamental an issue as decolonization. It was not reasonable to expect the Special Committee to withdraw resolutions that it had itself prepared and to accept amendments which, by their nature, devalued the basic agreements that had been reached, especially in regard to protection of the rights and aspirations of the peoples of Non-Self-Governing Territories which the international community had a moral and legal obligation to report. Postponing action might have serious consequences for the interests of the peoples of those territories.

28. Furthermore, some Member States which were also administering Powers, had questioned the Special Committee's work at a recent meeting of the Fifth Committee, in connection with the reports issued by the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the utility of seminars held under the auspices of the United Nations in general, and of the Special Committee in particular. The same thing had occurred in the Sixth Committee. Given that context, as Acting Chairman of the Special Committee he was deeply concerned by the fact that

certain administering Powers, while urging the Committee to cooperate, were simultaneously doing everything they could to undermine its work.

29. He drew the Committee's attention to the need to protect the rights of the peoples of Non-Self-Governing Territories and the continuing mandate of the Special Committee and the United Nations as a whole, warning that procrastination would serve only to lend credibility to the questions about certain sectors of the United Nations that had been raised in some of the Organization's other forums and undermine the mandate with which the Special Committee had been entrusted in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. The draft decisions before the Committee, with the amendments that had been accepted by the Special Committee, reflected the consensus of the Special Committee, whereas the other proposed measures did not.

30. Mr. LARRAIN (Chile) said that his country supported the draft decision submitted by the United Kingdom, on the understanding that the process of informal consultations that the Special Committee had been conducting with the administering Powers would thereby benefit. The time that had been allowed for the consultations was adequate and compelled both parties to do their utmost to find solutions and points on which they could agree. At their 1997 meetings, the Subcommittee on Small Territories and the Special Committee would have a clearer view of the situation. Chile called upon all delegations to support the draft decision.

31. Mr. CHTCHERBAK (Russian Federation) said that his country, like other members of the Special Committee, supported the United Kingdom's proposal, as it would facilitate the holding of further consultation with the administering Powers with a view to amending the draft decision submitted by the Special Committee, which was by no means perfect. The fundamental interests of the Non-Self-Governing Territories would thus be fully protected, while the Special Committee would be in a position to fulfil its mandate. The proposed postponement would not affect the work of the Special Committee in any way.

32. Ms. VARGAS (Colombia) expressed appreciation for the Chairman's efforts to achieve consensus and acknowledged that the parties had displayed a spirit of cooperation and flexibility, even though agreement had not been reached. The struggle for decolonization had been one of the basic objectives of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries since its founding and had consistently marked the action and history of that movement down to the present day, inasmuch as many of its current members had joined upon attaining their own independence. One of the great changes that had occurred at the United Nations was the increase in the number of its Member States as a result of the decolonization process, but that did not mean that that process was complete.

33. At their Cartagena Conference, held in October 1995, the Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries had reaffirmed the inalienable right of the peoples of Non-Self-Governing Territories to self-determination and independence, in conformity with General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) of 14 December 1960, regardless of the size, geographical location, population and limited natural resources of the Territory in question. They had reaffirmed their commitment to the speedy and complete eradication of colonialism as early as possible and had supported the effective implementation of the plan of action for the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism. The principle

of self-determination should be applied to Non-Self-Governing Territories in accordance with the plan of action and the resolutions of the General Assembly and the Charter of the United Nations. Also, at their meeting held in September in New York, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs had noted that the goals of decolonization had still not been fully realized and had therefore renewed their appeal to the international community to defend and protect the interests of the peoples of Non-Self-Governing Territories in their pursuit of self-determination, in accordance with resolution 1514 (XV) of the General Assembly. They had also called for the establishment of an effective coordinating mechanism between the administering Powers and United Nations agencies to promote development assistance for the peoples of Non-Self-Governing Territories and had urged that practical measures be adopted to implement the plan of action in order to achieve the goal of eradicating colonialism by the end of the century. For the reasons described above and because it shared the views expressed by the representative of Papua New Guinea, Colombia did not support the amendments proposed by the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

34. Mr. NÚÑEZ MOSQUERA (Cuba) said that the future of United Nations activities in the field of decolonization could be decided during the current meeting of the Special Committee on Decolonization (Fourth Committee). The peoples of Non-Self-Governing Territories and world public opinion were awaiting the results of the vote that was due to take place. The information provided by the Chairman showed precisely how the situation had developed. In the recent negotiations, the Special Committee of 24 had accepted several of the amendments proposed by the administering Powers, but the latter had subsequently made further requests, including a request that no vote should be taken on the draft decision on small Territories which had been recommended by the Special Committee.

35. In his report, the Chairman had omitted to mention that at the first meeting of the Special Committee with the administering Powers, which he had convened, the delegations of the United Kingdom and the United States of America had pointed out that the meeting was unofficial for the simple reason that they did not recognize the Special Committee on Decolonization and were not prepared to cooperate with it. Any delay in approving the Special Committee's report would affect the work of the Subcommittee on Small Territories, Petitions, Information and Assistance, which was due to meet in February 1997, and the proposal was aimed precisely at impeding the Subcommittee's work. Delay in the approval of the draft decision would weaken the proposal by the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries that the medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001 should again include a programme on decolonization. It was difficult to have faith in the willingness of the administering Powers to cooperate with the work of the Special Committee in the light of the recent statements by several representatives to the Fifth Committee that the Special Committee on Decolonization was obsolete and the fact that the administering Powers themselves were only grudgingly providing the resources necessary for the Committee to do its work.

36. Each year, the Fourth Committee heard a large number of petitioners from Non-Self-Governing Territories who pleaded with the Committee not to abandon them, not to yield to pressures and to complete the work of the United Nations in the field of decolonization. While the leaders of the members of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries had declared their readiness to speed up the process of decolonization and to achieve the total eradication of colonialism by

the year 2000 and had reaffirmed their support for the self-determination of peoples, the administering Powers proposed to delay the process of decolonization and to remove from the draft decision prepared by the Special Committee the paragraph which referred to self-determination and the paragraph concerning the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples.

37. It was inconceivable that in the post-cold war period there should be countries which still refused to recognize the right to self-determination of the peoples of 17 Non-Self-Governing Territories. Some delegations stated that it would be better to defer consideration of the item so that the administering Powers could cooperate with the Special Committee. Those countries, however, had not supported any of the resolutions that had been submitted on the item, which made it difficult to believe in their willingness to cooperate. Cuba, in keeping with the position taken by the Special Committee on Decolonization and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, would vote against the proposal to defer the decision.

38. Mr. SAMADI (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that, as a member of the Special Committee on Decolonization, he supported the statement made by the Acting Chairman. The administering Powers were proposing to defer consideration of the question of small Territories, but offered no guarantees to members that they would cooperate with the Committee at its next session. That would not be in the interest of the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories and his delegation would therefore vote against the proposal.

39. Mr. ROJAS (Venezuela) said that, like the delegations of Sierra Leone, Chile and the Russian Federation, his delegation wished to leave the door open to dialogue so that a consensus on the matter could be achieved. He believed that the period of four months requested by the United Kingdom for that purpose was reasonable and he therefore supported the proposal.

40. Mr. DUMITRIU (Romania), speaking also on behalf of the Republic of Moldova, said that a consensus on the matter would represent a significant achievement by the Committee and, since he believed in the power of dialogue, negotiation and patience, he would vote in favour of deferring consideration of the item.

41. Mr. AL-ATTAR (Syrian Arab Republic) said that the Special Committee had tried to cooperate with the administering Powers and had accepted numerous amendments. However, if consideration of the item was postponed, it would be impossible to achieve the objectives of decolonization by the end of the century. He would therefore vote against the draft decision.

42. Mr. HOLOHAN (Ireland), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that he was in favour of deferring consideration of the item until March 1997. There had been too many votes, differences and recriminations in the Committee and the problems of decolonization would never be resolved through confrontation. It was necessary to build on past achievements and to keep open the possibility that the parties in question might reach an agreement through negotiation.

43. Mr. HE Yafei (China) said that he fully agreed with the statements made by the Acting Chairman of the Committee of 24 and the representatives of Colombia, Cuba, Iran and other countries. He opposed any postponement of consideration of

the item, since that would run counter to the interests and wishes of the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories and would paralyse the work of the Special Committee on Decolonization. While China supported the process of consultations, it could not agree that consultations should be used as a pretext to paralyse the work of the Special Committee.

44. Mr. LEGOWO (Indonesia) supported the statement made by the Acting Chairman of the Special Committee on Decolonization. Although he wished to see the consultations with the administering Powers continue, he opposed the proposal to defer the decision on the matter, since that would be against the interests of the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories.

45. Mr. AKBARUDDIN (India) said that his delegation was opposed to deferring the vote on the draft decision. What was at stake was the protection of the right of self-determination of the Non-Self-Governing Territories and respect for the wishes of the General Assembly which, in 1995, had voted against all the proposed amendments. His delegation was in favour of holding consultations, but not at the cost of deferring consideration of the item on decolonization. It was clear that the administering Powers were resorting to procedural means in order to undermine substantive questions. The same sectors which were advocating efficiency and the need to reduce costs were proposing measures which would prolong the decision-making process and require further meetings of the Committee. India, like other members of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, did not accept those delaying tactics and called on all delegations to vote against the proposal for deferral.

46. Mr. JONAH (Sierra Leone) said that Sierra Leone had been an active member of the Special Committee since its establishment and would not accept any attempt to sabotage its work, but his delegation did not agree with the interpretation that had been made of the request for deferral. Sierra Leone was also a loyal member of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and it did not share the view of other members that raising a procedural question was an attempt to undermine the fundamental principles of decolonization.

47. Mr. WERNO HOLTER (Norway) said that, although his delegation supported the objectives and principles of the draft decision, it was also well aware of the advantage to everyone of reaching consensus on that important issue. His delegation felt that it might be possible to achieve that consensus during the current session if further consultations were held. Norway therefore supported the proposal to defer the vote.

48. Mr. HANIF (Pakistan) said that his delegation could not support the proposal to defer consideration of the draft decision. Consensus was a laudable goal which could only be reached step by step. The Special Committee should confirm the agreements reached so far and reaffirm that it was prepared to continue the negotiations on the other aspects.

49. After a procedural discussion in which Mr. SAMANA (Papua New Guinea), Mr. ARKWRIGHT (United Kingdom) and Mr. MARRERO (United States of America) took part, the CHAIRMAN said that the representative of the United Kingdom could reformulate his proposal as a motion to adjourn the debate, under rule 116 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

50. Mr. ARKWRIGHT (United Kingdom) moved that the debate on the item should be adjourned until March 1997.

51. Mr. JONAH (Sierra Leone) and Mr. MARRERO (United States of America) said that they supported the motion put forward by the representative of the United Kingdom. Mr. NÚÑEZ-MOSQUERA (Cuba) and Mr. HE (China) said that they opposed the motion.

52. A vote was taken on the motion put forward by the United Kingdom.

In favour: Andorra, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Ecuador, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Georgia, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Micronesia (Federated States of), Morocco, Netherlands, Norway, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Sierra Leone, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Venezuela.

Against: Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Algeria, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belize, Botswana, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, China, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Ghana, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Lao People's Democratic Republic, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Jamaica, Lesotho, Lebanon, Malaysia, Mozambique, Nigeria, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Saint Lucia, Samoa, Singapore, South Africa, Sudan, Surinam, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, United Republic of Tanzania, Viet Nam, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Abstaining: Argentina, Azerbaijan, Bolivia, Brazil, Burundi, Cambodia, Costa Rica, Egypt, El Salvador, Fiji, Guatemala, Marshall Islands, Jordan, Kazakstan, Malta, Mexico, Nicaragua, New Zealand, Panama, Republic of Korea, Tunisia, Uruguay.

53. By 52 votes to 46, with 22 abstentions, the Committee decided to adjourn its debate on the question of the Non-Self-Governing Territories, with the exception of Tokelau, until 1997.

54. Ms. KHAN-CUMMINGS (Trinidad and Tobago), speaking as a member of the Special Committee and as Chairman of the Subcommittee on Small Territories, Petitions, Information and Assistance, said that she had voted in accordance with the position of the Chairman of the Special Committee that consideration of the draft decision submitted by that Committee should not be deferred. She was disappointed that it had not been possible to resolve the matter in the Special Committee itself and that it had been necessary to refer the issue to the Fourth Committee. She was encouraged that informal consultations had been initiated with the administering Powers. The members of the Committee must continue to work for the right of the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories to self-

determination and must not lose the momentum gained, since the social and political advancement of those peoples would be achieved only with the active participation of everyone concerned.

55. Mr. BUNE (Fiji) said that it was regrettable that no common ground had been reached between the parties so that it had not been possible to adopt the draft decision by consensus. The informal consultations, which had been long overdue, constituted a missed opportunity. they had turned into a dialogue of the deaf, since the administering Powers had displayed little political will or willingness to compromise on certain critical issues and, for their part, some members of the Special Committee had refused to yield and were determined to maintain the status quo.

56. The peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories were suffering the consequences of the tug of war between the Special Committee and the administering Powers. The situation required that sterile debate should be left behind and attention should be paid to the future of the Non-Self-Governing Territories. Fiji solemnly appealed to the administering Powers to return to the Special Committee, participate fully in its debates and cooperate with it. It would not be possible to break out of the impasse if both sides continued to engage in the game of one-upmanship. It must be remembered that the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories were the primary subject of the discussions, deliberations and consultations. Fiji had therefore abstained in the vote on the motion to adjourn consideration of the item.

57. Mr. ALVAREZ (Uruguay) said that Uruguay had abstained with mixed feelings, because on many occasions it had advocated consultations between the administering Powers and the Special Committee. Uruguay felt that the negotiations to be carried out until March 1997 should be concerned with how to achieve the objective of eliminating colonialism before the year 2000 and not merely the text of a possible consensus resolution. It hoped that that would mark the beginning of a process of cooperation between the administering Powers and the Special Committee on the substance of the question, so as to find solutions which would meet the aspirations of the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories.

58. Mr. MÁRSICO (Argentina), referring to the votes on agenda items 89, 90 and 19, said that his delegation recognized the efforts of the Special Committee to adjust its work and pronouncements to the new international situation. It also reiterated the importance of the full and integral implementation of General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV), and the observance of the principles set forth in it concerning self-determination and the territorial integrity of States.

59. With regard to the draft resolution on the activities of foreign economic and other interests which impeded the implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples in Territories under colonial domination, his delegation objected to the indiscriminate condemnation of the activities of foreign interests and noted that foreign investment had positive aspects for the economic development of the Territories.

60. Mr. NÚÑEZ-MOSQUERA (Cuba) said that his delegation had voted against the motion by the United Kingdom because it was convinced that the motion was not in the interests of the population of the Non-Self-Governing Territories. It was

confident that, when the General Assembly had to confirm that recommendation in the plenary meeting, the result of the vote would be different.

61. Mr. SAMANA (Papua New Guinea) said that his delegation had voted against the motion to adjourn the debate because the motion did not have the consensus of the members of the Special Committee. His delegation believed that the motion had serious consequences for the interests of the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories. The decision gave a negative signal to those peoples, who were looking to the Committee to defend their rights. In his capacity as Chairman of the Special Committee, he said that he was prepared to engage in dialogue, since it had been shown that negotiations could produce results, as long as there was no question of undermining the interests of the peoples.

62. The CHAIRMAN said that the Committee had concluded its consideration of agenda item 19.

The meeting rose at 5.40 p.m.